



The Prosci ADKAR Model for Organizational Change Success

ADKAR

ORGANIZATIONAL
CHANGE
ISN'T OPTIONAL—
SUCCESS IS

Prosci®



You may already know the **Prosci ADKAR® Model** for individual change, but did you know it's a powerful tool for overcoming challenges with organizational projects and initiatives?

For **25 years**, the ADKAR Model has been indispensable to organizational leaders, project managers and change teams in top companies around the world. They rely on ADKAR to address complex issues like engaging key leaders and teams, preventing employee resistance, building organizational readiness for change, and much more.

Learn how you can apply ADKAR to your enterprise projects and initiatives, and equip your organization to achieve change success.

Prosci **ADKAR** Model

A	Awareness - Of the need for change
D	Desire - To participate and support the change
K	Knowledge - On how to change
A	Ability - To implement required skills & behavior
R	Reinforcement - To sustain the change



How the ADKAR Model collectively drives organizational change

The ADKAR Model enables change at the individual level—but even the largest organizational shifts succeed one person at a time. Think about it: complex changes only stick when people embrace them. Successful organizational transformation is what happens when groups of individuals move together from today's reality to tomorrow's vision.

Here's how each element of the ADKAR Model—Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability and Reinforcement—contribute to your success with organizational change:

Awareness of the need for change

Achieving Awareness drives initial momentum and engagement. Employees need to be aware of the business reasons for the change and get straightforward answers from people they trust. If people don't know why change is necessary, problems like confusion, misinformation, low morale and costly resistance will result.

For example, employees who don't understand why a new ERP system is being implemented are unlikely to support or adopt it. They'll ask, "Why should we make this change?" "And why now?" "What if we don't?" Answering these questions transparently helps people develop Awareness. This creates the foundation for change by aligning everyone around common business goals.

Desire to participate and support the change

Once people have Awareness, the next question they ask is, “What’s in it for me?” Answering this question effectively can transform understanding into commitment.

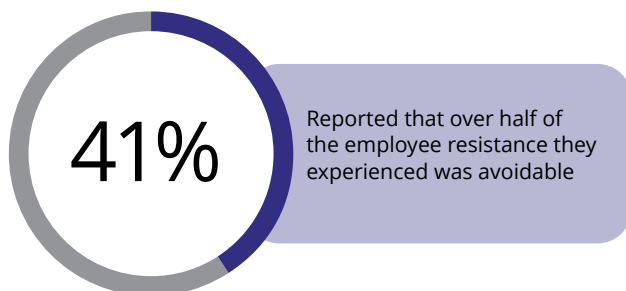
Desire is typically the most challenging ADKAR element for organizations. For people to achieve it, they must choose to make a change. Organizations need personal commitment from employees to move beyond surface-level compliance. When people genuinely want to change, they invest discretionary effort and help drive success.

Knowledge of how to change

Knowledge is about supplying people with the learning they need to participate in and support the change. Unfortunately, many organizations offer training too soon—before their people have Awareness and Desire. This creates barriers that lead to resistance because employees are not ready to learn.

When delivered at the right time, training helps employees build Knowledge they need to understand the new processes, tools, systems, skills and behaviors required to support the organizational change. Without building Knowledge, even those committed to the change will struggle and may give up.

Top Reasons for Employee and Manager Resistance



Top reasons for **employee** resistance

1. Lack of awareness of the reason for the change
2. Change in role
3. Fear
4. Lack of support from and trust in management or leadership
5. Lack of inclusion in the change



Top reasons for **manager** resistance

1. Organizational culture
2. Lack of awareness and knowledge about the change
3. Lack of buy-in
4. Fear
5. Misalignment of project goals and personal incentives
6. Lack of confidence in their ability to manage the people side of change

Source: Prosci Research Hub, © 2023

Ability to demonstrate required skills and behaviors

Building Ability turns knowledge into action. There's often a gap between knowing how to do something and being able to do it effectively. And not everyone learns the same way or at the same pace.

After training, organizations need to help people demonstrate desired behaviors through coaching, practice time and feedback. Building Ability in this way builds their confidence and competence with new ways of working.



Reinforcement to sustain the change

Once people have Ability, Reinforcement sustains the change after go-live. Too often, organizations skip this critical ADKAR element and move on to new projects. Why should your organization bother with Reinforcement? Because the human brain is wired for habit. When employees don't achieve the Reinforcement element of ADKAR, they revert to old behaviors and develop workarounds.

When this happens, project rework becomes necessary, timelines lengthen, resistance returns—and ROI evaporates. Organizations avoid problems like this and support Reinforcement through recognition, rewards, accountability and removing barriers to sustain desired changes.



Address Organizational Change Challenges With ADKAR

Applying ADKAR to organizational changes gives your teams a clear way to plan effectively for change. It equips them to address difficult challenges proactively, support employees throughout the transition, and achieve levels of success never thought possible.

Let's explore key reasons change professionals choose our ADKAR Model to tackle their most pressing organizational challenges:

Challenge 1: Leading organizational change initiatives is complex

Prosci research shows that organizations achieve greater success when they apply a structured change management approach. The ADKAR Model is research-based, proven, easy to understand and apply, scalable, flexible and cross-cultural. It's effective for organizational changes of all sizes and levels of complexity.

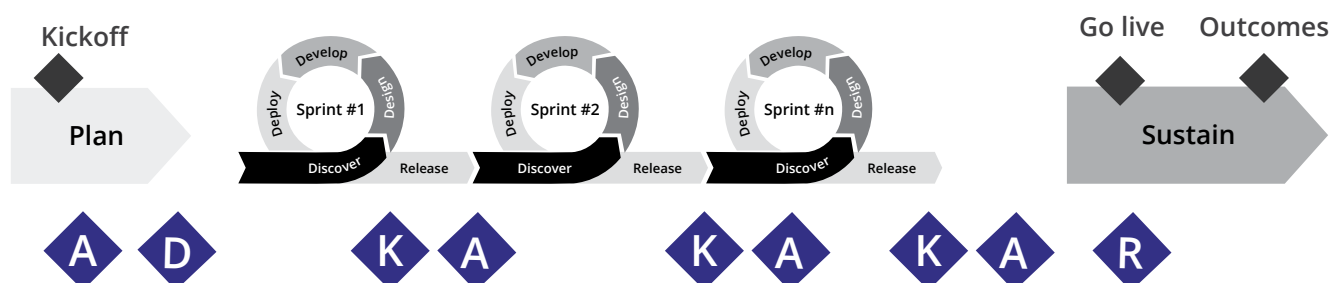
ADKAR's structure helps organizations simplify change by:

- Breaking change into manageable components
- Providing clear success metrics for each element
- Enabling targeted intervention when barriers arise
- Creating a common language about change across the organization
- Making change management repeatable and scalable for any size organization, from 10 people to 10,000 to 100,000

Challenge 2: Aligning with today's project management approaches is tricky

Integrating ADKAR elements into project management plans helps project managers ensure each phase aligns with the respective ADKAR milestones. ADKAR's flexibility makes it applicable to all types of project management methodologies, including waterfall, Agile and hybrid approaches.

ADKAR Milestones in Iterative Change



Challenge 3: Gaining commitment from key leaders and teams is difficult

Successfully implementing organizational change requires engaging key people, such as leaders and front-line employees, to fulfill critical roles.

Prosci's Best Practices in Change Management research shows that change professionals struggle with a lack of executive support and active sponsorship. This is often because executives don't know how to fulfill their sponsorship role during change. ADKAR is an effective tool for helping executives move through their transitions, so they commit to and support organizational changes effectively.

Similarly, it's challenging to engage the people directly affected by changes to their work. Helping impacted groups adopt and use the change, supporting them through the process, and removing barriers to adoption is essential to your success.

Gaining commitment from leaders, employees and others during a change requires a concerted effort to educate people and build awareness and desire for organizational change.

"By integrating ADKAR with project management, the change management program became more holistic and adaptable. It provided a structured framework to align project activities with the stages of individual change, ensuring that the project team is equipped to facilitate and support the transformational journey..."

Chief Operating Officer,
Autocheck Africa

The ADKAR Model improves engagement by equipping organizations to:

- Communicate the business reasons for change clearly and consistently
- Help leaders and employees understand the risks of not changing
- Answer "What's in it for me?" for different manager and employee groups
- Galvanize leaders to actively champion the change
- Create opportunities for employee involvement in the change
- Listen, understand and address peoples' concerns early



Challenge 4: Managing resistance to change is not optional

Resistance is a natural human reaction to organizational change, especially when it affects a person's job. It's an emotional and psychological response that arises when individuals face uncertainty, perceive it as a threat, or don't know the reasons behind a change. Ignoring or failing to adequately address employee concerns is not an option—resistance will hinder implementation, reduce morale and stall productivity.

Organizations may unintentionally foster a change-resistant culture without a structured approach for preventing and addressing resistance. A culture rife with resistance behaviors, poor attitudes, internal politics and personal agendas is a top obstacle to successful change.

Fortunately, Prosci research shows that about half of resistance is avoidable with the right prevention strategies. The ADKAR Model enables resistance prevention by helping organizations identify and remove barriers before they can cause problems. It also helps teams identify the root causes of resistance, enabling organizations to develop targeted strategies to address and manage resistance effectively.

Here's how this preventive approach works:

- By analyzing **Awareness** barriers early, organizations can identify and fix communication gaps. For example, if employees don't understand why a digital transformation is happening, organizations can strengthen their messaging and create more targeted communications before resistance develops.

- At the **Desire** level, organizations can anticipate personal concerns that might lead to resistance. They can proactively answer questions and involve employees in shaping the change, which builds a sense of ownership and commitment.
- **Knowledge** gaps are a common source of resistance. ADKAR enables organizations to identify the skills and information people need to succeed with the change. Providing appropriate training and resources early prevents frustration and resistance behaviors from feeling unprepared.
- The **Ability** element helps organizations spot potential barriers to implementation. If people understand and accept the change but struggle to execute it, organizations can provide additional coaching and practice time to remove barriers to adoption.
- Through **Reinforcement** planning, organizations can identify where old habits or systems might pull people back to previous ways of working. They can then create mechanisms to sustain the change and prevent workarounds.



Challenge 5: Building change capability is critical to organizational success

"Building change capability" means developing organizational structures and processes—and competencies in people—that drive effective organizational change management.

Today's workplaces are volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous—or VUCA—which means organizations must build change capability to succeed. The overwhelming pace and volume of technological advancements, market shifts, and global disruptions have created an environment where change is constant and accelerating rather than occasional. Without strong change capability, organizations risk falling behind competitors, losing market share, and failing to adapt to evolving customer needs.

Building change capability requires long-term investment and upfront commitment. Still, when organizations develop this capability, they execute changes more effectively, reduce change fatigue and resistance, increase agility and resilience, and improve the ROI on critical initiatives.

Successful change is just part of the way they do business.

The ADKAR Model is a robust framework and foundation for building change capability. It provides a structured approach at both individual and organizational levels.

Here's how the ADKAR Model supports building change capability:

- **Awareness** helps organizations and their people understand why change capability matters. Leaders and employees recognize the costs of poor change management and the value of building this competency. This awareness drives investment in change management resources and infrastructure.
- **Desire** turns awareness into a commitment to building change capability. Organizations foster this by demonstrating the benefits of strong change management, celebrating success stories, and creating incentives for developing change skills.
- **Knowledge** ensures people understand how to manage change effectively. This includes training in change management methodology, best practices for sponsorship, resistance prevention and management, assessment approaches, and using various change management tools and techniques.
- **Ability** moves beyond knowledge to practical application. Organizations develop ability through hands-on experience managing changes, coaching and mentorship programs, practice applying change management tools, real-world project experience, and feedback and improvement cycles.
- **Reinforcement** helps embed change management into an organization's DNA and culture. They use performance metrics, recognize effective change leadership, highlight effective integration with project management processes, provide ongoing training and development, and share successes.



Prosci Clients Achieve ADKAR's Organizational Benefits

ADKAR's role in successful organizational change is evident in our clients' successes globally over the last 25 years. These real-world examples demonstrate how organizations leverage our ADKAR Model to navigate complex changes and drive measurable results:

Complex ERP Systems Integration

UKG, one of the world's leading human capital management (HCM) cloud companies, embarked on a multiyear ERP system integration project impacting 12,000 employees across regions, customers and partners. Integrating the ADKAR Model into their activities was crucial to the project's success.

"By following the ADKAR Model, we're seeing the individual transformations. People are wrapping their heads around what they need to do to adopt these system integration changes."

**Director,
Strategic Business Operations, UKG**

People-First Digital Transformation

Mateco, a Netherlands-based heavy equipment company, acquired several companies domestically and internationally. They needed to align processes across their growing business and implement a digital transformation, all while respecting the unique needs and cultures of the original organizations. After successfully bringing a people-focused approach to the digital transformation, Mateco regularly earns commitment and support for critical projects by applying the ADKAR Model and supporting people through difficult changes.

"See ADKAR as a mindset, not a tool. The more you understand what it can offer, the more you can find ways to get more out of it."

**Internal Communications Specialist,
Thermo Fisher Scientific**

Post-Merger Process and Culture Integration

Thermo Fisher Scientific, a global biotech company with 135,000+ employees across 65 locations around the world, struggled to adapt to changes after a merger and several acquisitions. The company's size and patchwork of cultures and processes hindered their success. Adopting the ADKAR Model helped fuel leadership commitment, a common language for change, and cost savings of \$2M per year.

Grow Stronger From Organizational Change With ADKAR

The Prosci ADKAR Model is based on the understanding that organizational change happens one individual at a time. It's practical, easy to apply, and applicable to complex organizational changes of all sizes. You can use our ADKAR Model to gain commitment from key people and teams, prevent and manage resistance, and build change capability for sustainable success.

The ADKAR Model provides the structure and direction to adopt and sustain organizational change. When you put people first during change, you achieve successful outcomes.

That's change done right.

Can ADKAR Equip People to Adopt Artificial Intelligence?

Introducing enterprise AI technologies to an organization can spark mixed reactions from employees. If you're implementing these tools in critical areas of your business, you know that resistance is an especially complex issue. How do you support people the right way and get a solid return on your investment?

Use the Prosci ADKAR Model to drive the transformation.

- A** **Awareness:** Deliver focused workshops where leaders demonstrate how AI enhances productivity and job satisfaction. This shifts employee perception from threat to opportunity.
- D** **Desire:** Create forums for employees to shape AI integration. By involving teams in key decisions, you can build genuine enthusiasm for the technology.
- K** **Knowledge:** Role-specific training provides hands-on experience with AI tools, ensuring employees understand how to apply them effectively.
- A** **Ability:** Mentorship programs pair experienced AI users with peers, building practical skills through real-world application.
- R** **Reinforcement:** Celebrate AI implementation successes and maintain regular feedback sessions to address challenges, embedding AI into company culture.

With ADKAR, organizations can achieve strong AI adoption while fostering a culture of continuous learning, increasing employee engagement, and driving higher productivity and innovation across the organization. **Discover Prosci's innovative approach to enabling success with AI.**





Change Management Certification Program

Learn how to apply the Prosci ADKAR Model and the entire Prosci Methodology to an organizational project when you attend the **Prosci Change Management Certification Program**.



Model Mastery Training + Certification for Advanced Practitioners

Already Prosci Certified? Prosci's advanced training and certification track includes two deep-dive courses in ADKAR Model Mastery, where you'll elevate your success with resistance prevention and management. Now, you can equip yourself to tackle more complex change challenges—and eventually become a Prosci Certified Advanced Change Practitioner.



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